

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1412

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to high school mathematics end-of-course assessments.

Brief Description: Regarding mathematics end-of-course assessments.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Dammeier, Probst, Lias, Kelley, Kenney and Van De Wege;
by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/1/11, 2/17/11 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows students in the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014 to meet the state standard in high school mathematics for purposes of graduation using the results from one end-of-course assessment rather than two.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 21 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Angel, Billig, Dahlquist, Fagan, Finn, Haigh, Hargrove, Hunt, Klippert, Kretz, Ladenburg, Lias, Maxwell, McCoy, Probst and Wilcox.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

In 2008 the Legislature directed the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to replace the comprehensive state high school mathematics assessment with a series of end-of-course assessments (EOCs) beginning in the 2009-10 school year. The law currently states that the EOCs are to be developed to cover standards for first-year mathematics (Algebra I and Integrated I) and also second-year mathematics (Geometry and Integrated II). For purposes of high school graduation, students in the graduating class of 2013 and 2014 are permitted to

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use the results of the EOC for the first year of mathematics plus the EOC for the second year of mathematics, or the results from a comprehensive mathematics assessment. Starting with the class of 2015, only the EOCs will be used as the state high school mathematics assessment. Students must meet the state standard on both mathematics EOCs to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement, which is required for graduation starting with the class of 2013.

The comprehensive mathematics assessment was offered to students in the 10th grade. The EOCs are designed to be offered to students after they take the respective mathematics course. The SPI estimates that approximately 60,000 10th grade students in the class of 2013 took Algebra I or Integrated I as freshmen and are now enrolled in Geometry or Integrated II. Some took the first year of high school mathematics in eighth grade. This class will be expected to take two mathematics EOCs in the spring of 2010 in order to meet graduation requirements. A comprehensive high school mathematics assessment is no longer being offered.

Summary of Bill:

Students in the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014 must meet the state standard on one end-of-course (EOC) high school mathematics assessment rather than two in order to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA), which is required for graduation. The option for these students to use results from a comprehensive mathematics assessment is replaced by an option to use results from a retake assessment. It is clarified that students, beginning with the class of 2015, have the option to meet the state standard on both EOC high school mathematics assessments or use results from one or more retake assessments to earn a CAA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Last year there was a proposal to adjust the graduation requirement in mathematics to align the assessment with instruction and reduce assessment costs. If this bill is not passed, there will be additional costs. "End-of-course" should mean just that: a test given when a student completes a course. The test should not occur two or three years later. This is a fairness issue which has now become a budget issue. The state has old standards and new standards, and old tests and new tests. There are liability issues here. This bill does not delay the mathematics graduation requirement; it simply avoids situations where a student has taken a Geometry course this year but must also pass an Algebra test for a class taken one or two years earlier.

Delay would be more fair for students to assure they are adequately prepared to be successful and assure they have the opportunity to pass the tests. Even though mathematics instruction has been a priority, the system is not prepared to impose these requirements in the middle of a test transition. School boards are listening to parents and students. They want testing to be rigorous, and want students and teachers to be held accountable, but they also want fairness.

In a single classroom, teachers have students with skills that range from third grade to post high school. Due to budget cuts, class sizes will grow and extended learning opportunities for struggling students will decline. Unless something is done, these students will be held to a high standard that cannot be met.

(With concerns) The Washington State Board of Education (SBE) does not want to eliminate or delay requirements in mathematics. For mathematics, however, the SBE realizes that this issue is raised due to the state's current fiscal situation and transition to the EOCs. Requiring students in the class of 2013 to pass only one test would be supported, but not the class of 2014.

(Neutral) Research shows that students do not fail schools; schools fail them. When students get to college, they take remedial classes and do not complete degrees. Sixty percent of Washington students attend schools in the bottom two tiers of the state accountability index. Schools need to do their jobs better and stop rationalizations.

(Opposed) The state has asked students to participate in a program of learning and set expectations for performance. The state keeps sending the same message: students who are not doing well enough to pass the test will not be required to pass it. The state must establish standards and insist on them being met. Any bill to eliminate or delay mathematics graduation requirements is opposed. The EOCs are a good way to ensure students have knowledge of the necessary material. Delaying is not helping students in any way.

It is understood that there is a transition problem from one test to another. But this bill is simply an excuse. There are seventh and eighth graders in Geometry, and this bill does nothing to fix that. The policy should be that whatever year the EOCs are started, the graduation requirements should start. There is a need to maintain momentum and high standards for all students and for the education system. This is not in the best interest of students or the state.

The policy should be to grandfather those who have already taken the class, but the state should not back down on the graduation requirement. What the system really needs to be working on is getting students ready to pass both tests, not continually delaying. This bill might be a compromise, but it is not a very good one.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Santos, prime sponsor; Randy Dorn and Alan Burke, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Scott Seaman, Tumwater High School; Dan Steele, Washington Association of School Administrators; Marie Sullivan, Washington State School Directors' Association; and Shannon Rasmussen and Christyna Paris, Washington Education Association.

(With concerns) Brad Burnham, Washington State Board of Education.

(Neutral) Liv Finne, Washington Policy Center.

(Opposed) Robert Henkel; Charles Hoff; Jim Grossnickle; Anne Moore and Heather Cope, League of Education Voters; Anne Luce, Partnership for Learning; Chad Magendanz, Issaquah School Board; Lew McMurrin, Washington Technology Industry Association; and Ramona Hattendorf, Washington State Parent Teacher Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.